



April 7, 2024

To: City of Portland
Re: Housing Production Strategy
From: Community Alliance of Tenants

Recent findings from the National Low Income Housing Coalition's latest Gap report reveal a stark reality: in 2022, a staggering 77% of households classified as extremely low-income (0-30% AMI) are grappling with an overwhelming burden, spending more than half of their income on housing expenses in our region and beyond. It's not just a matter of economics; it's about the intersecting identities within populations facing homelessness and housing insecurity. A report from 2021 sheds light on the disproportionate representation of various groups among the rent-burdened and extremely rent-burdened populations in our area: 55% identify as Latino/a/x, 54% as American Indian/Alaska Native, and 53% as Black/African American. It's clear: our city's housing strategy must prioritize dismantling systemic barriers to affordable housing access, especially for communities of color and historically marginalized groups. Passing policies that ensure everyone has a secure, affordable home is crucial to breaking down inequitable obstacles to housing.

The Community Alliance of Tenants is a member of the Welcome Home Coalition. As The City of Portland charts its course to meet its housing needs by 2045, the Welcome Home Coalition emphasizes the importance of investing in housing models that effectively tackle this gap with efficiency and sustainability for the long term. Leveraging LIHTC-subsidized affordable housing alongside rental subsidy vouchers has proven successful in creating units accessible to households at or below 30% AMI. While LIHTC housing presents valuable opportunities not typically provided by the market, it's essential to recognize that rent in these units can still burden many households, as it's tied to AMI rather than actual tenant income. Over the next five years, we urge the city to invest in LIHTC affordable housing, community land trusts, and land banking, while exploring other non-market social housing models that have demonstrated success globally. We are in dire need of solutions to our affordable housing crisis that do not further commodify housing. Housing must be acknowledged as a fundamental human right, not merely an instrument for profit—a system that overwhelmingly favors corporations over people.

Portland is a recipient of federal funds for housing development. Because it receives federal funds, the City of Portland is required to affirmatively further fair housing. In light of this obligation, we urge the City of Portland to create a housing production strategy that is informed by the analysis of impediments to fair housing and affirmatively addresses fair housing by undoing historic racial discrimination and race-based housing segregation. The Housing Production strategy should address the diversity of needed housing types and create equitable access for everyone by addressing housing cost, location, housing type, size, universal visitability, and culturally specific housing that includes design and other considerations.

Sincerely,
Ianda Allen
Ianda Allen
Director Community Engagement
Community Alliance of Tenants